

# Developing Multilingualism-Sensitive Teaching Competence in an Online Training Programme for In-Service Language Teachers

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## Abstract

This paper addresses the promotion of multilingualism-sensitive teaching competencies (MTC), an objective that has received little attention in in-service language teacher training and respective research. We will elaborate on the role of pluri- and multilingualism in language education and explore the demands for in-service training programmes of MTC. Using a DBR-approach, in our project “The Next Level”<sup>1</sup>, we aim at developing and evaluating design principles for an online in-service language teacher training programme fostering MTC. The project concept and its design principles include a differentiation of the MTC construct and will serve to describe the structure and components of the programme as well as its practical implementation. Within the project, we will also investigate the development of teachers’ MTC through the training programme. First research results will provide insights into teachers’ MTC at the beginning of the programme.

**Key terms:** multilingualism; multilingualism-sensitivity; English language teaching; in-service teacher training; online learning; DBR

## Abstract

Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit der Förderung mehrsprachigkeits-sensitiver professioneller Handlungskompetenz (MSPH), einem Thema, dem bisher wenig Aufmerksamkeit in der Lehrkräftefortbildung und diesbezüglicher Forschung zukam. Hierzu werden wir auf die Rolle von individueller und gesellschaftlicher Mehrsprachigkeit im Fremdsprachenunterricht eingehen und auf Anforderungen an Lehrkräftefortbildungen diesbezüglich eingehen. Mithilfe des *Design-Based Research* Ansatzes zielt unser Projekt „The Next Level“ darauf ab, Designprinzipien für eine online Lehrkräftefortbildung zur Förderung von MSPH zu entwickeln und zu evaluieren. Die Projektkonzeption mit ihren Designprinzipien beinhaltet eine Ausdifferenzierung von MSPH und dient der Beschreibung der Struktur und der Komponenten der Fortbildung sowie ihrer praktischen Umsetzung. Darüber hinaus untersuchen wir die Entwicklung der MSPH der teilnehmenden Lehrkräfte im Verlauf der Fortbildung. Erste Forschungsergebnisse geben in diesem Beitrag Einblick in die MSPH der Lehrkräfte zu Beginn der Fortbildung.

**Schlüsselbegriffe:** Mehrsprachigkeit; Mehrsprachigkeitssensitivität; Fremdsprachenunterricht; Lehrkräftefortbildung; digitale Bildung; DBR

## 1. Multilingualism and English Language Teacher Education

Due to migration flows and an ever-growing diversity of local and global communities, classrooms have become increasingly culturally hybrid and linguistically diverse. These social realities have also been reflected in the education system with the objective of promoting learners as ‘social agents’ who “draw

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upon all of their linguistic and cultural resources and experiences in order to fully participate in social and educational contexts, achieving mutual understanding, gaining access to knowledge and in turn further developing their linguistic and cultural repertoire.” (CoE, 2018, p. 157). This objective relates to the central European aim of fostering a multilingual society, i.e. “the coexistence of different languages at the social and individual level” (CoE, 2018, p. 28), including plurilingual competencies, i.e. “the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual” (ibid.). Accordingly, plurilingual discourse competence has been postulated as a goal of English language teaching, which describes the ability to use one’s linguistic repertoire in multimodal negotiation processes aiming at linguistic participation and autonomous personality development (Elsner & Lohe, 2021).

In order to achieve the objective of a multilingual society while actively considering students’ individual plurilingual repertoires for further language learning, teachers require multilingualism-sensitive teaching competencies. Not only do these entail a positive attitude towards multilingualism, but also specific diagnostic competencies for assessing and evaluating their students’ plurilingual competencies. Furthermore, teachers need a willingness to try and employ their students’ prior linguistic knowledge as a resource for teaching and learning, even if these languages are not part of their own language repertoire (Kropp, 2017). Correspondingly, teachers require teaching practices at their disposal to apply in language classrooms. Such practices should see multilingualism as an interconnected concept of language knowledge and experiences without sacrificing the goals of an advanced language proficiency in the respective language being taught (cf. Niesen & Elsner, 2020). Such integrated approaches aim at using prior language learning experiences, language competencies, and linguistic knowledge as means of supporting further language learning and language awareness, which comprises an explicit structural knowledge of languages, an understanding of one’s own language competencies, and a sensitivity to language learning and use (cf. Wildemann et al., 2020). Methodological suggestions for the implementation of multilingual approaches into language lessons include using and fostering knowledge of the variety of languages present, (multilingual) language learning strategies, reflecting experiences with language learning, as well as using language comparisons and code switching (cf. Elsner & Lohe, 2021). These approaches go beyond the scope of comparing and contrasting languages as different entities but are attentive to integrated mental structures and beneficial effects for further language learning. Hence, language teachers should not only initiate and support students’ willingness to learn new languages but also employ students’ existing linguistic repertoire to enhance competencies in specific languages. Whereas the former mirrors a “multilingualism-as-goal”-approach, the latter reflects a “multilingualism-as-tool”-approach (Niesen, 2019).

Even though many teachers acknowledge the potential benefits of versatile linguistic resources for further language learning, studies have shown that they feel neither prepared for, nor supported in purposefully including their students’ linguistic resources whilst at the same time promoting their language skills in another language (Jakisch, 2019; Heyder & Schädlich, 2014). Thus, many rely on self-acquired competencies while wishing for further training opportunities, applicable ready-made material, as well as collegial support (cf. Bredthauer & Engfer, 2018; Ekinçi & Güneşli, 2016; Heyder & Schädlich, 2014). Appropriate training programmes for in-service English language teachers and corresponding research remain rare though (Legutke & Scharf, 2016; Strohn, 2015). Addressing the need to foster language teachers’ MTC, we have developed and implemented an online in-service teacher training programme on multilingualism and cultural diversity within the project “The Next Level” at Goethe-University Frankfurt. In the following, we will elaborate on the design and research strategy of such a programme. Our programme and its underlying concepts are applicable to language teacher trainings across the curriculum. In this article, however, we focus primarily on English language

teaching. While, technically, English is taught as a foreign language in our participants' German school contexts and not as a first or second language, the term "language teaching" will be used in order to highlight the idea of multilingualism-sensitivity in contexts that have traditionally used the notion of foreignness.

## **2. Development of the Programme, Design Strategy and Research Focus**

Our project aims at developing and evaluating a customised online training programme. One approach to achieve this objective is employing design-based research (DBR), a methodological framework that focuses on developing and optimising innovative learning environments as well as generating design principles (cf. The Design Based Research Collective, 2003). These design principles are then verified through cycles of design, trial, analysis, and redesign for future reference. The results can help to bridge what is perceived as theory-practice discrepancies between existing theoretical concepts and teaching practices (cf. Euler, 2017) as is the case with MTC.

### **2.1 Research Focus and Approach**

We aim at closing some of these gaps by designing, evaluating, and investigating a teacher training programme on MTC following these main research questions:

1. How does the teachers' MTC develop throughout the training programme?
2. What are the main characteristics of an online training programme that fosters the MTC of in-service teachers?

To answer these questions, the design-process should be both theory-driven and focused on practically implementing its products in real-life settings to allow practitioners to draw conclusions they can refer to in related situations (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). The process includes the specification of the problem at hand and an evaluation of relevant prior research and experience, which then allows for the development of design principles and design prototypes (cf. Euler, 2014, 2017). Hence, we began by specifying and defining our construct of MTC and the context we want to integrate it in. Afterwards, we developed design principles that served to create a first prototype of the training programme. In DBR, prototypes undergo a formative evaluation that allows the researchers to specify their design principles, which are then verified summatively (Euler, 2014). In our context, formative evaluation involves strategies such as reflecting the choice of methods and obtaining feedback from teachers during the training programme. Summative evaluation includes information on the final outcome of the training programme, in our case through a pre-post-assessment of MTC.

### **2.2 Programme Design**

To foster MTC, we also need to consider previous research attending to quality features of in-service teacher training. The most influential and substantial works providing insights into successful approaches can be found in the natural or educational sciences (cf. Rzejak & Lipowsky, 2018, Lipowsky & Rzejak, 2019). Rzejak and Lipowsky (2018) have identified general quality criteria of effective teacher trainings in their literature review, which can be adapted to domain-specific contexts such as the focus on MTC in language education. These criteria focus on professional development specific to the subjects discussed, coaching and feedback, opportunities to experience self-efficacy through the practical application of concepts, options for peer-cooperation with other teachers, and an

appropriate time frame with repeated opportunities to complete the cycles of input, trial, and reflection. Given the dynamic nature of individual plurilingualism and social multilingualism, continuous training opportunities as well as state-of-the-art input and opportunities for gaining and reflecting experiences seem particularly crucial for fostering MTC.

Based on these quality criteria, in the following passages we will identify the design principles we have developed that serve to construct the training programme prototype. With the intention to create an online training programme to foster MTC, the design principles will address the dimensions of content, method, and technological implementation.

### 2.2.1 Content Dimension

Multilingualism-sensitive teaching competence has been defined as the ability to adapt learning and teaching approaches with their respective learning goals to students' linguistic resources (Niesen, 2018). Following Wildemann, Hoodgarzadeh, Esteve, and Walter (2014), who have developed a curriculum and a competence definition for a related research domain (German as a Second Language), we have specified competence descriptors for multilingualism-sensitive teaching in our previous research on pre-service English language teacher education (Elsner et al., 2020). For the purpose of our practical training programme in an in-service teacher context, we have adapted them as follows: In-service language teachers with multilingualism-sensitive teaching competence (MTC) can...

- reflect on the relevance of their students' multilingualism on the social and individual level and conclude a willingness to include their students' linguistic resources in their teaching. (attitude dimension)
- name concepts of linguistic (and cultural) heterogeneity including multi- and plurilingualism, transculturalism and language awareness, define them in their own words and describe methods to implement these in their teaching. (knowledge dimension)
- notice and assess the diverse prior language (learning) experiences of their learner groups using appropriate tools. Furthermore, teachers can adapt their language teaching accordingly by designing, implementing and reflecting on their teaching materials and lesson plans regarding their students' individual language resources. They do so while also pursuing the target language goals. (skill dimension)

Furthermore, we have developed a model for students' plurilingual discourse competence and proposed several practical approaches for teaching that will serve to support teachers to implement multilingualism-sensitive practices in their teaching (Elsner & Lohe, 2021).

Being a practical approach to developing learning environments, design-based research is always focused on distinct objectives that are relevant to and situated in a specific context (cf. Euler, 2017). In the training programme, all participants are teachers of English as a foreign language or German as a second language, but they vary both in the school forms – ranging from primary school to upper secondary school – and learner groups they teach. Thus, the construct of MTC needs to be differentiated in a way that is compatible with the teachers' various contexts and that allows for a practical adaptation in their specific learning environments.

**Design Principle 1 (DP1):** MTC should be addressed from different perspectives in order to adapt to teachers' individual interests and the needs of their learner groups. As we expect teachers to start the programme with different prior knowledge and, thus, different MTC, several content foci are offered as elective modules. An approach that allows teachers to choose topics regarding their interests has been identified as a factor for successful in-service teacher training programmes before

(Lipowsky & Rzejak, 2017). The topics of our modules are embedded within current investigations into multilingualism and teacher education, which specifically address, but are not limited to aspects such as the teachers' abilities to diagnose their learners' multilingual resources, to actively draw on these resources through manners of language transfer, intercomprehension, and the use of multilingual texts and media (cf. Fäcke & Meißner, 2019). A collection of five elective modules which address these topics (cf. illustration 1) are framed by a compulsory introductory and final module. The introductory module provides teachers with basic knowledge and terminology important for MTC and introduces the participants to their trainers and the programme structure. While module 1b explicitly addresses teachers of German as a second language (GSL) and thus does not find further consideration in this article, the other elective modules predominantly focus on teaching English. The final module unites all teachers again to compile material, draw conclusions, carry out evaluations and reflect on future perspectives. To ensure the quality of each module, all modules have been evaluated and revised with the whole team of researchers and teacher educators. For further quality assurance and comparability of the evaluation results of each module, all elective modules follow the same structure and methodological approach, which will be elaborated on in the next chapter.

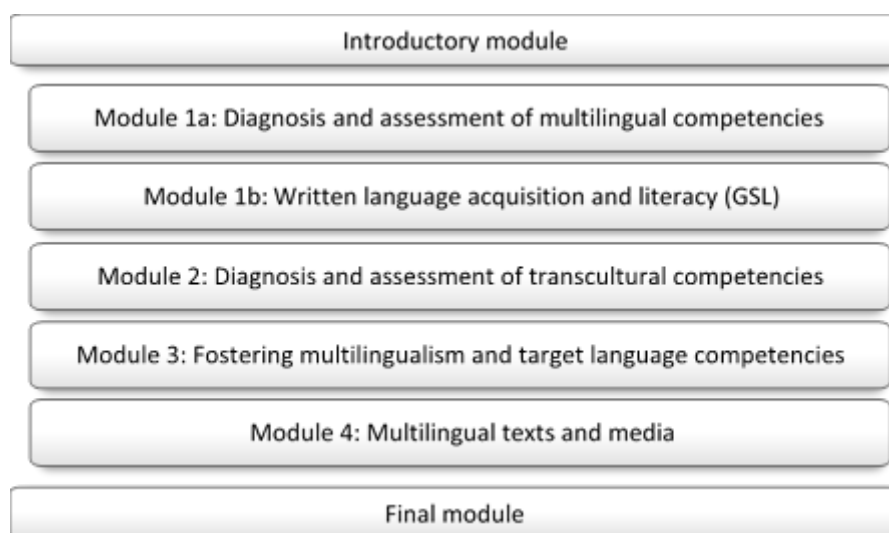


Figure 1: Overview of the six modules of the training programme: All teachers take the introductory and final module and choose at least one of the modules in between. Module 1a and 1b are offered simultaneously while all other modules follow each other.

### 2.2.2 Methodological Approach

**Design Principle 2 (DP2):** Each module contains the following phases: theoretical and conceptional input on multilingualism-specific topics, opportunities for developing and employing bespoke teaching materials, and opportunities for reflecting experiences and drawing conclusions. The purpose of this approach is to foster intensive involvement with the topics, allow for further practical experience, and gain confidence. As material for multilingualism-sensitive teaching is rare for most school forms, material development and evaluation are crucial to foster skills that will help teachers to apply multilingualism-sensitive practices in their specific learner groups in the long run. For this purpose, we follow Lipowsky and Rzejak's (2018) structure of repeated input, trial, and reflection. This structure is implemented twice in each module with the second cycle focussing on reflection, redesign, reimplementation, and final reflection of the material developed in the first cycle. Reflection is a crucial component of teacher training programmes and requires contexts, tools, and approaches that make implicit knowledge explicit. Such intensive reflections of experiences are also necessary for building up

teachers' self-esteem and confidence in their abilities (Rzejak & Lipowsky 2018). A time frame of 4 weeks for each module seems appropriate for this purpose, which means that if teachers decide to participate in all modules, the training programme will expand over 24 weeks (app. 7 months).

**Design Principle 3 (DP3):** Multifaceted assessment options, i.e. self-assessment (self-evaluation and e-Portfolio reflections), peer-feedback (discussions and reflections of developed materials), and trainer-feedback (coaching, scientific expertise), allows teachers to identify and reach their objectives and to reflect on their professional development individually. As pointed out, teachers' professional development is a lifelong process. Therefore, fostering self-assessment strategies is beneficial irrespective of the specific programme. Furthermore, peer-feedback and collaboration in the development and reflection of teaching materials allow teachers to form a local community of practice (Bloh & Bloh, 2016), i.e. a collaborative group of teachers with similar goals who want to learn from each other. This has shown to be particularly helpful with regard to working on implicit knowledge (ibid.).

In summary, each module consists of interlocked phases of input, trial, and reflection including feedback and self-assessment. Furthermore, elective modules, feedback, formative assessment, and cooperation enable flexibility and individualised learning, which leads to the third dimension addressing the technological design of the intervention.

### 2.2.3 Technological Implementation

The methodological concept of this training programme demands for a careful choice of online tools, as phases of input and self-directed learning require different settings than phases of discussion and cooperation.

**Design Principle 4 (DP 4):** The choice of asynchronous and synchronous communication in the training programme is dependent on the task at hand: Input, self-evaluation, and sharing ideas in asynchronous settings allows for more flexibility for each participant. Discussion, evaluation and reflection are more effective in synchronous digital learning settings. Asynchronous phases in online training programmes are ideal for mass communication (e.g. a trainer sharing a video presentation), focus on self-directed learning (e.g. self-evaluation of competencies), or on interpersonal communication that is based on sharing more complex products or outcomes (e.g. sharing results in a forum) (Arnold, 2013; Salmon, 2013). Thus, asynchronous phases leave more flexibility for the teachers and allow for self-directed learning. In these phases, teachers either interact with the learning system (e.g. by working through tasks that help them to create teaching materials) or collaborate with one another (e.g. by commenting on each other's results in a forum). Synchronous online learning, for example in video conferences, can initiate motivating discussions in problem-solving activities that need interpersonal communication (cf. Gegenfurtner et al., 2020). Demanding tasks, such as reflecting the execution of a lesson plan, have been embedded into live meetings in our training programme. The various communicative set-ups also require different roles of the teacher educators in each phase. For asynchronous phases, their focus is on distributing information and preparing tasks. In synchronous situations, their responsibility shifts towards initiating and supporting group discussion processes (Arnold, 2013). Furthermore, video tutorials and online office hours for technology-related questions ensure that all participants can use the learning environment well.

The assembly of content, methodological structure, and technological implementation in the different communication situations of each module are visualised in illustration 2. The illustration also

includes more detailed descriptions of the tasks in each phase and illustrates how communication forms shift within each module to maximise the benefit for the teachers' MTC.

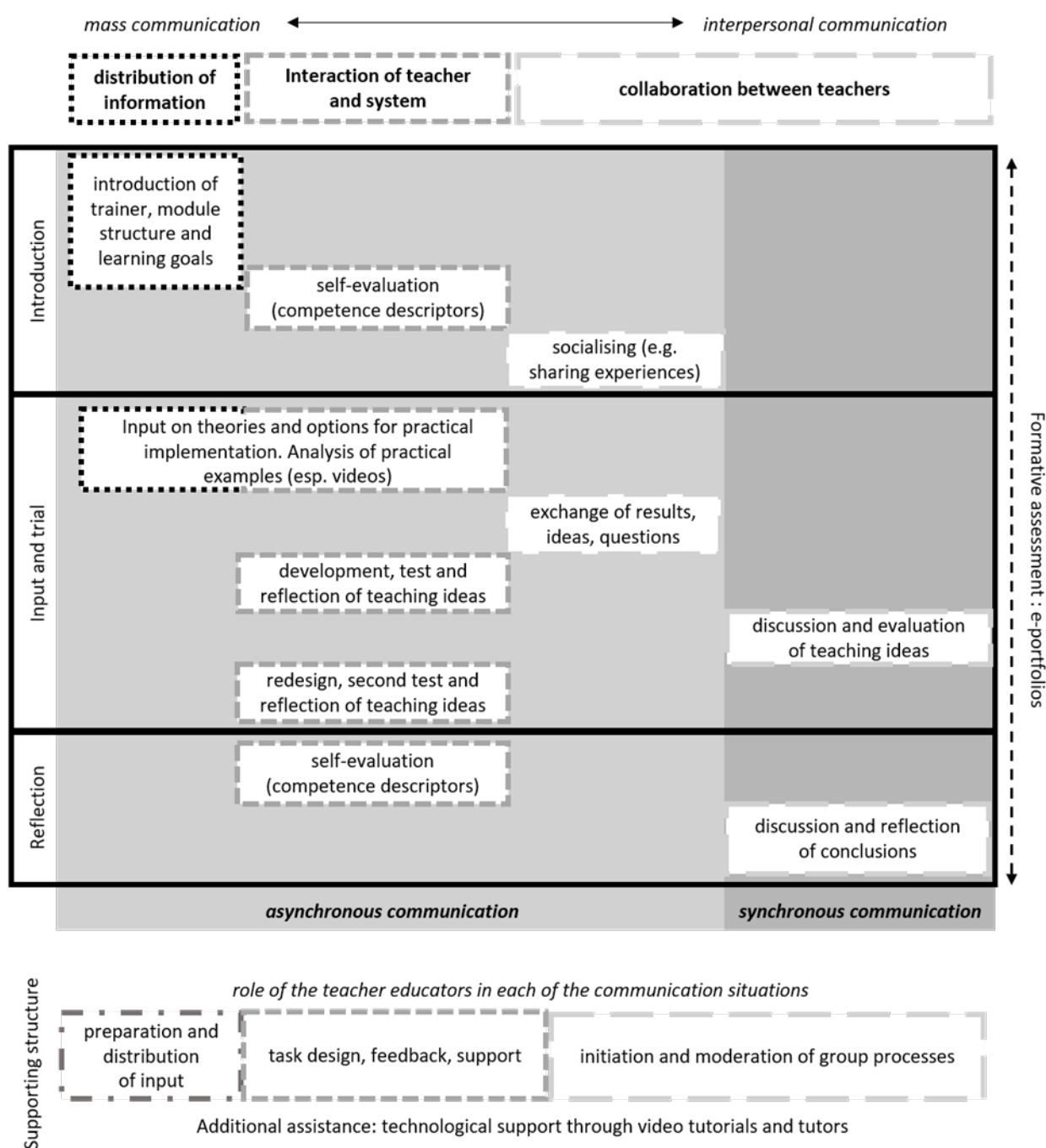


Figure 2: Overview of modules, content distribution, methods focus and tutor roles

This chart shows how the dimensions of content, method and technology come together in each of the elective modules. It shows the steps of a module progressing from top to bottom. As illustrated, each step has a specific methodological purpose that is realised in an appropriate communication form within either asynchronous or synchronous learning formats. The last box highlights the role of the teacher educators in each communication situation of the training programme.

### 3. Summative Quality Assessment of Teachers' MTC at the Beginning of the Training

In addition to the self-evaluation tasks at the beginning and end of each elective module, a summative pre-/post-assessment was implemented in the introductory module and will be implemented in the final module to gather summative information on how teachers' MTC develops through the training programme (cf. research question 2). As the training was still in progress at the point of writing this contribution, only results of the pre-assessment in the introductory module can be presented. They contribute to the research question by providing information on how teachers' MTC can be described regarding previous knowledge, concepts, and beliefs about multilingualism-sensitive teaching at the beginning of the training programme. Comparing these results to the final outcomes of the training programme in the post-assessment will allow us to evaluate the design principles and the success of the project in general.

The test was available to teachers in October 2020 and they were encouraged to finish it within the first four weeks of the training programme at their own pace without consulting any sources. At the point of analysis,  $n=31$  teachers had completed the pre-assessment. It featured questions addressing all three dimensions of MTC: attitude, knowledge, and skills. Knowledge-focused questions included individual definitions of multilingualism or naming arguments that would illustrate the relevance of multilingualism for language teaching. Furthermore, the teachers completed a short list of Likert scale items with statements such as "I feel well-prepared to teach multilingual groups" (competence dimension of attitude). Afterwards, teachers were introduced to a video-recorded teaching sequence taken from a series of English lessons of an 11<sup>th</sup> grade in Germany in which the teacher aims at including his students' linguistic repertoire by means of a research task searching for and summarizing online sources in different languages. Information on the video included a class profile of reading competences in the languages learnt both in school and family settings. This served to make the skill-dimension of MTC visible through analysing and reflecting situations, which include the use of multilingual materials, multilingualism as a topic, the comparison of different languages, or reflecting the use of several languages in everyday life. Furthermore, establishing the same situation for all participants of the study enables us to collect comparable data. Teachers watched scenes from the first lesson of the teaching sequence and were asked to name three situations they consider noteworthy regarding the linguistic resources of students and how they were included in the teaching process. Lastly, teachers reflected on the success of including multilingualism-sensitive approaches in the video considering their prior knowledge and experience while also including alternative options for action and conclusions for their own teaching practice.

In order to describe the MTC of the teachers in the beginning of the training, their results of the pre-assessment have been digitally collected and evaluated using the principles of qualitative content analysis and inductive category development (Mayring, 2015). Approaching the data with an inductive approach allows for the description of the teachers' MTC without normatively enforcing the standards of current research. The focus is on observing and describing individual MTC profiles and comparing results in order to gain insights about similarities and differences. In this contribution we will focus on the first three tasks (definition, relevance, Likert scale items). The qualitative data for each teacher has been split up per task and per logical unit of meaning for the first two tasks (number  $u_i$  of coding units:  $u_{\text{definition}}=89$ ,  $u_{\text{relevance}}=85$ ). Afterwards, a first category system has been developed based on 30% of the data with a subsequent expert validation of the categories and restarted coding by two coders. Discrepancies were solved through consensus coding for the final evaluation of the data (Kuckartz, 2018). Likert scale results have been analysed for frequency and  $\mu$ .



### 3.1 First Results and Conclusions

In the following, we will present first results of the summative quality assessment and consequent conclusion for the training programme design. The analysis provides preliminary insights into teachers' MTC at the beginning of the training programme, including all three dimensions of knowledge, skills and attitude, which allows us to adapt the training programme to the target groups' needs. A complete list of the results of each of the two analyses can be found in table 1 and 2 in the appendix.

#### 3.1.1 Focus on Individual Plurilingualism in Everyday Life

In the definition task, all teachers in the sample describe their concept of multilingualism as communicative competencies of an individual in more than one language with 36 codings in total. Doing so, they mostly refer to competencies generally without further specification, e.g. *"Eine Person, die mehrere Sprachen beherrscht"* (subj. 8; "A person who masters several languages"), or they use words indicating productive skills such as 'speaking' or 'writing'. Receptive skills, including reading or listening, are rarely mentioned, implicating that the focus of the teachers' concepts of multilingualism tends towards languages as means to express oneself (as opposed to understanding others). A few teachers also refer to the notion of symmetrical language acquisition in several languages. Moreover, some define a bilingual speaker as a person who has balanced competencies in at least two languages (balanced bilingualism). Others, however, emphasize that language levels in several languages can be different. In contrast to individual language competencies, only few teachers mention societal multilingualism in their statements (5 codings). The definitions thus conceptualise plurilingualism as an individual characteristic rather than addressing multilingualism as a social reality per se. Yet, "everyday life" is the context teachers most often mention for the use of several languages, whereas multilingualism in school and at the workplace are only added sporadically. Furthermore, their idea of individual plurilingualism seems to revolve strongly around the idea of heritage languages as expressed in frequent references to migration and culture (17 codings). Plurilingual (discourse) competencies as potential outcomes of learning processes however are only mentioned 5 times, esp. regarding languages taught in school. Multilingualism as an advantage of, part of, and topic in language learning are each only mentioned once.

Overall, individual plurilingualism due to migration as a premise of teaching is assigned greater significance in the sample than plurilingual discourse competence as a goal of teaching. We can build on this prior knowledge in the training programme by encouraging teachers to try out approaches that utilize their students' existing linguistic repertoires for further language acquisition, including methods that are attentive to different levels of language profession and include both receptive and productive skills. The results also imply that the teachers are aware of societal multilingualism, even if they rarely mention it as a social phenomenon explicitly. Thus, we intend to purposefully expand their concept of individual plurilingualism by emphasising the idea of the plurilingual vision. For this purpose, the input phases and discussions of the first modules will address this topic with the aim to raise awareness of the double role of multilingualism as a goal and tool in language teaching.

#### 3.1.2 Addressing Benefits and Challenges of Using Plurilingualism as a Resource in Language Teaching

The concept of students' plurilingualism as primarily a precondition of language teaching is also reflected in the teachers' results for the second task which focuses on the relevance of multilingualism in language teaching. Aspects of plurilingual discourse competence as goals of language teaching are

again only rarely mentioned (2 codings), but almost all teachers refer to individual plurilingualism as a resource for language teaching. Teachers even elaborate how addressing students' plurilingualism can support further language learning in general: They describe that plurilingual students can benefit from language comparisons (10 codings, e.g. by comparing vocabulary or grammatical structures) or from their prior language learning experiences (8 codings). The relevance of multilingualism is also substantiated by the teachers in the sample with references to aspects of intercultural competence (10 codings), e.g. „*Mehrsprachigkeit schafft Offenheit zwischen den und für die verschiedenen Kulturen sowie deren Wahrnehmung und Sicht auf die Welt.*“ (subj. 13; „Multilingualism creates openness between and for different cultures as well as awareness for their perception and view of the world“). Furthermore, they stress the importance of acknowledging their students' linguistic competencies, especially by pointing out the resulting positive influence of this on language awareness (6 codings) as well as on motivation and students' perception of self-efficacy (8 codings). However, some also note that multilingualism could play a problematic role in their classroom when trying to avoid cross-linguistic interferences (5 codings, e.g. mixing grammatical structures) or other disadvantages (3 codings, e.g. that learning several languages simultaneously would result in limited vocabulary in each).

The teachers in the sample depict students' plurilingualism as mostly beneficial for further language learning but also as a challenge or even potential obstacle in teaching. They are aware of two approaches to foster plurilingual discourse competence already (language comparisons, utilizing students' prior experience) and name several potential advantages these can have on students' linguistic and personal development. We can draw on these existing aspects of MTC in the training programme by encouraging teachers to discuss their prior experiences and by expanding these with new practical learning opportunities. Thus, we adjusted the input phases of the modules to include a broader variety of methods for including students' plurilingualism (e.g. fostering language learning strategies). Also, reflection phases in the synchronous online sessions will explicitly address benefits and challenges of implementing these.

### 3.1.3 Heterogeneous Self-Assessment of Preparedness to Teach Multilingual Groups

Even though the teachers in the sample are all language teachers, they have rarely described plurilingual discourse competence as a goal, product, or part of teaching practices in the definition or the relevance task. Instead, plurilingualism was primarily described as a premise of language teaching. If we consider the Likert scale items as well, one possible explanation could be that teachers hope to learn how to support their multilingual students in becoming proficient speakers of English rather than aiming at the plurilingual vision in general. The scales in illustration 3 show, that even though most of the teachers in the sample do not consider language comparisons to be confusing for students, they are strongly opposed to speaking languages other than English in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, about half of the teachers state that they do not feel well-prepared to teach multilingual groups while the other half feels rather well-prepared (see statement 3 in illustration 3), which reflects the heterogeneous prior MTC we anticipated in the training programme.

This confirms our decision to explicitly address the plurilingual vision as well as to include practical training phases and reflections in the training programme. Moreover, the results reinforce the importance of creating a community of practice in the training programme as teachers can learn from each other based on their heterogeneous prior MTC.

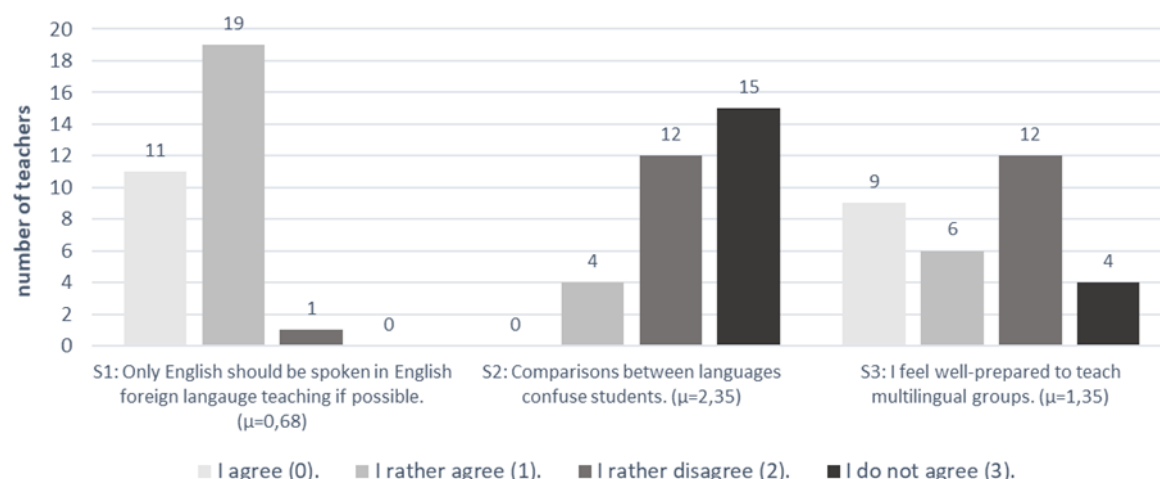


Figure 3: Results of the Likert scale items by frequency of agreement with each of the three statements (S) concerning multilingualism in language teaching

### 3.2 Preliminary Conclusion

So far, the results affirm prior demands for training programmes of MTC that stress the importance of including ideas and material as well as the relevance of gaining further experience and establishing more collegial support (cf. Bredthauer & Engfer, 2018; Ekinci & Güneşli, 2016; Heyder & Schädlich, 2014). Furthermore, existing results on GSL teachers' heterogeneous self-assessment of their preparedness to teach multilingual groups could be found also for English language teachers here. What is new on the other hand, is how teachers focused primarily on individual, pre-existing plurilingualism and benefits of it while rarely including the plurilingual vision of language teaching. The future analysis of further results of the pre-assessment will provide additional information on the prior knowledge and experience of the group especially regarding their reflective skills and tools for multilingualism-sensitive teaching they know so far. The final post-assessment<sup>2</sup> and evaluation will then give insight into whether and how the new input and experiences have influenced their MTC.

## 4. Summary and Outlook

Our DBR study includes the conceptualisation, evaluation and implementation of an in-service teacher training programme aiming at the development of multilingualism-sensitive competencies. So far, the design phase has shown that the topic of MTC requires an adaptive approach that accounts for teachers' different prior experiences and knowledge bases as well as for their diverse learner groups. Flexibility does not only play a role with regard to the modalities of in-service teacher education, but also with regard to the choice and implementation of the topical focus. Our modular concept offers selective topics including the assessment and promotion of language competencies, transcultural awareness, and the use of multilingual media. The methodological and technological set-up of the online learning environment comprise asynchronous and synchronous communication in order to distribute information, allow teacher-system interaction and/or direct collaboration between teachers

<sup>2</sup> For the post-assessment in March and April 2021, teachers will complete the same tasks again albeit analysing a different video scene from the same lesson unit to avoid effects of the first video analysis on the reflection. In doing so, we expect teachers to include knowledge and experience they have gained throughout the training and that they show more reflective skills. The post-assessment will reveal whether this is successful and will provide insight into the characteristics of their MTC development.

depending on the objectives of the respective phases. These characteristics of the training programme have been revealed by the design results (cf. research question 2). Furthermore, the pre-assessment has provided first insights into teachers' heterogeneous MTC at the beginning of the training programme (cf. research question 1), which allowed for further adaption of the design to the target groups' needs. This included building on teachers' prior knowledge of students' individual plurilingualism, expanding their methodological skillset as well as accentuating the plurilingual vision as a goal of language teaching in the modules. The results of the pre-assessment will also serve as comparison of teachers' MTC after the training. Based on the assessments, the self-evaluations and an evaluation survey at the end of the training, strengths of the design as well as possible improvements will be revealed that will support redesign processes and the development of corresponding design principles. Of course, such design principles remain limited to the context of an in-service language teacher training programme of MTC but will provide insights into how such interventions can successfully be designed in the future.

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## Appendix

multilingualism as communicative competencies of individuals ( $\Sigma=36$ )	command of more than one language (14)
	productive skills in more than one language (14)
	receptive skills in more than one language (4)
	language varieties within one language (3)
	affective components of multilingualism (1)
contexts of language use and acquisition ( $\Sigma=18$ )	multilingualism at work (3)
	multilingualism in school (5)
	multilingualism in everyday life (10)
language levels ( $\Sigma=5$ )	symmetric acquisition (3)
	asymmetric acquisition (2)
aspects regarding migration and culture ( $\Sigma=17$ )	migration as a cause of multilingualism (4)
	concept of “mother tongues” (7)
	German as a second language (2)
	languages as cultural affiliation and expression (4)
multilingualism as a characteristic of groups ( $\Sigma=5$ )	multilingualism as a social phenomenon (5)
multilingualism as a learning goal and part of learning processes ( $\Sigma=8$ )	learned multilingualism (5)
	multilingualism as an advantage for language learning (1)
	implementation of multilingual practices in teaching (1)
	multilingualism as a topic in the classroom (1)

Table 1: Results of the qualitative content analysis for the definition of multilingualism items (see chapter 3.1.1). 6 main categories with 19 subcategories have been identified. Numbers indicate the sum of appearances throughout the 89 coding units for n=31 teachers who participated.

Plurilingualism as a resource for LT ( $\Sigma=64$ )	facilitation of further language learning in general (15)
	benefit through language comparisons (10)
	benefit through language learning experiences (8)
	facilitation of intercultural competencies (10)
	importance for the integration of students (1)
	facilitation of language awareness (6)
	acknowledgement of students' languages and experiences of self-efficacy to foster motivation (8)
	opportunities for identity development (2)
	facilitation of further language teaching (4)
Addressing ML to avoid problems in language learning ( $\Sigma=8$ )	difficulties arising from cross-linguistic interferences (5)
	ML as a disadvantage (3)
Relevance of ML due to multilingual realities ( $\Sigma=11$ )	ML as a premise for LT (4)
	migration (5)
	globalisation (2)
ML as a result of LT ( $\Sigma=2$ )	ML as a goal of LT (2)

Table 2: Results of the qualitative content analysis for the relevance of multilingualism (ML) items in language teaching (LT) (see chapter 3.1.2). Numbers indicate the sum of appearances throughout the 85 coding units for n=31 teachers who participated.